

## MILL CREEK VETERINARY SERVICES: Herd Health Tips

### *Milk Sample Collection and Handling*

Proper technique in milk sample collection is extremely important. Some of the organisms that are common contaminants also have the potential to cause disease. Contaminated samples and improper storage can lead to misdiagnosis, increased work, wasted money, and confusion.

#### **Materials for sampling**

- 1) Sterile tubes- 5-15ml.
- 2) Alcohol- 70% alcohol (ethyl or isopropyl).
- 3) Cotton balls- soaked in alcohol, or commercially prepared, individually packaged alcohol swabs.
- 4) Refrigerator, freezer, or ice cooler- for storing samples.
- 5) Racks- for holding sample tubes/vials while sampling and storage.
- 6) Teat dip- disinfectant for cleaning teats.
- 7) Towels- paper towels or individual cloth towels.
- 8) Markers- permanent/waterproof ink pen for identifying samples.

#### **Sampling Technique**

- 1) **Label tubes**- label tubes prior to sampling; neat and clearly.
- 2) **Clean teats**- with towel or hand clean off loose dirt/manure.
- 3) **Forestrip**- discard first few streams of milk.
- 4) **Predip**- predip with an effective teat-dip and allow at least 30 seconds contact.
- 5) **Dry teats**- dry thoroughly with paper towel or individual cloth, especially teat end.
- 6) **Alcohol scrub**- scrub teat ends vigorously with moist alcohol soaked cotton. Teats should be scrubbed until no more dirt appears on the swab. When sampling more than one quarter, clean the far quarters first working towards you and do not touch teat ends after they have been cleaned. For non-cooperative cows clean and sample teats individually until all quarters are sampled.
- 7) **Sample**- Remove cap keeping open end of cap down. Keep tube at a 45 degree angle and do not touch teat end with tube. Collect 1-3 streams of milk (no more than  $\frac{1}{2}$ -  $\frac{3}{4}$  tube full) and immediately replace cap. If more than 1 quarter is sampled, start with the closest teat and move to far side of udder (opposite of cleaning).
- 8) **Teat dip**- dip teat after sampling
- 9) **Store samples**- Store samples immediately on ice or refrigeration. If samples are to be cultured at a later date (over 24 hours) freeze immediately.

***SPECIAL NOTICE***

***Over the next few weeks, you will receive a survey from our clinic entitled VETERINARY SERVICES SURVEY. In the survey we are asking clients for feedback on our services and policies. The input we receive will help us provide the best possible services for your operation.***

***We hope that you will take a few minutes to complete the form and send it back to the Touching Base Program.***

***THANK YOU,***

***MILL CREEK VETERINARY SERVICES***